

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6801

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 0620

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, UK, UN, SHUM, PFOR

SUBJECT: SHEILA CASSIDY: TESTIMONY TO UNHRC

REF: LONDON 00475

1. BRITISH EMBASSY SANTIAGO HAS INFORMALLY PROVIDED US COPY OF DR. CASSIDY'S WRITTEN TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO UNHRC WORKING GROUP ON CHILE IN GENEVA. WE ARE REQUESTED TO PROTECT TESTIMONY AND SOURCE UNTIL STATEMENT IS RELEASED BY UNHRC OR BRITISH.

2. WE CONSIDER CASSIDY PRESENTATION PERSUASIVE. SHE HAS WRITTEN LOW-KEY, CAREFULLY RESTRAINED, PRECISE DESCRIPTION, WITH SOME OF TECHNICAL OBJECTIVITY OF TRAINED MEDICAL PERSON. HER TESTIMONY TALLIES WITH PUBLIC ACCOUNTS SO FAR RELEASED. SHE CONFIRMS THAT SHE GAVE EXTENSIVE INFORMATION IN HER POSSESSION TO DINA INTERROGATORS, BUT ONLY UNDER DURESS OF SEVERE ELECTRIC TORTURE AND WHAT SHE BELIEVED TO BE DANGER OF RAPE AND DEATH. WE FIND NOTHING IN HER PERSONAL TESTIMONY WHICH CONFLICTS SIGNIFICANTLY WITH GENERAL BODY OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE CONCERNING METHODS AND ACTIVITIES OF GOC SECURITY FORCES.

3. IN ADDITION TO TESTIMONY ON HER OWN CASE, DR. CASSIDY RELATES
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INFORMATION GIVEN TO HER BY FELLOW PRISONERS CONCERNING THEIR

EXPERIENCES. SHE CAREFULLY LABELS THIS AS
HEARSAY AND DISTINGUISHES BETWEEN WHAT SHE OBSERVED AND WHAT
SHE WAS TOLD, AND BETWEEN WHAT REPORTEDLY HAPPENED EARLY ON
AND WHAT IS PRESENT PATTERN. SHE CLAIMS TO HAVE EXAMINED SOME
PHYSICAL EVIDENCES OF TORTURE, AND COMMENTS AT LENGTH OVER BAD
FOOD AND LACK OF MEDICAL CARE IN DETENTION CENTER TRES ALAMOS.
OF 120 WOMEN WITH WHOM SHE TALKED, SHE STATES 90 HAD BEEN TORTURED
WITH ELECTRICITY; SEVERAL REPORTED SEXUAL ASSAULT BY A TRAINED
DOG IN EARLY PERIOD AFTER COUP, AND ONE GIRL REPORTED MASS RAPE
AND INSERTION OF RATS INTO VAGINA IN SAME PERIOD. THIS LAST
CASE, OF GIRL ARRESTED SHORTLY AFTER COUP WHO SAYS SHE HAS
BEEN HELD EVER SINCE, IS PRESUMABLY SOURCE OF STORY ON RATS WHICH
RECEIVED WIDE INTERNATIONAL CIRCULATION AND HAS BEEN VERY STRONGLY
DENIED BY GOC.

4. COMMENT: DR. CASSIDY'S TESTIMONY TALLIES IN GENERAL WITH
WHAT WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD TO BE DINA PRACTICE IN MANY OTHER CASES.
STORIES CONCERNING USE OF DOGS AND RATS HAVE BEEN WIDELY
DISSEMINATED IN CHILE; WE CANNOT JUDGE WHETHER THEY HAVE BASIS
IN FACT OR ARE MERELY REPETITION OF ANTI-GOC PROPAGANDA.
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